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Junction City Transportation System Plan Update Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #3

Meeting Date: January 31, 2013
Meeting Time: 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Location: Junction City Council Chambers at 680 Greenwood St.

Participants

CAC Members:

- Karen Leach, City Council
- Bob Biswell
- Mike Kaiser
- Ellen Mooney, Lane County Roads Advisory Committee
- Jason Thiesfeld

Project Management Team:

- John Bosket and Mat Dolata, DKS Associates
- Kevin Watson, City of Junction City
- Stacy Clauson, Lane Council of Governments/City of Junction City
- Savannah Crawford, Oregon Department of Transportation
- Steve Faust, Cogan Owens Cogan

Sign-in, Introductions, and Agenda Overview

Karen Leach opened the meeting. Steve Faust welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the Junction City Transportation System Plan (TSP) Update Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). Following introductions, Steve Faust reviewed the agenda and asked for any additions of which there were none.

Project Status and Upcoming Open House

John Bosket talked about the TSP being dependent upon the Comprehensive Plan, which is the planning foundation of the City. There has been some delay in this process to ensure that decisions made about the TSP align with the Comprehensive Plan. With clear direction from City Council, the TSP process can move ahead.

John stated that there is a draft set of TSP goals and policies that will remain open until the end of the process, so any suggestions for new or revised goals and policies are welcome. He reminded CAC members that they reviewed existing conditions at the last meeting in September 2012, including current pedestrian, bike, motor vehicle and safety issues. Today the CAC will review Chapter 4 of the TSP, Future Transportation Issues, focusing on future needs of the transportation system. The CAC will discuss solutions at

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their next meeting. Several ideas for potential solutions have come forth from the CAC and the Technical Advisory Committee.

Steve Faust described plans for the Transportation Open House, scheduled for Thursday, February 21st from 6 to 8 pm at Viking Sal. Outreach efforts include a flyer that went out with utility bills, a media release to local newspapers, an email to various business organizations and targeted outreach to advocacy groups, such as Travel Lane County and Greater Eugene Area Riders (GEARs), a bicycle advocacy group. CAC members suggested contacting the Lions club, Airport Rotary, Long Tom Grange and Shadow Hills Country Club.

Steve stated that the Open House will include several stations where participants could provide information about current and future transportation issues. The first station will be an overview of the project. The second station will include a list of transportation issues. Participants will use stickers to vote for their priorities and/or add issues that are not on the list. The final station will include maps of existing pedestrian, bicycle and motor vehicle/public transit conditions. Participants will be encouraged to identify locations of transportation problems and needs.

CAC members indicated that it is difficult to get people to come forward to talk about issues they would like to see addressed. Steve said that in addition to discussing issues with project staff, each participant will receive a form to use as another opportunity to record their comments.

Draft Chapter 4: Future Transportation Needs

Mat Dolata reviewed Chapter 4: Future Transportation Needs. The first step in determining future needs is to estimate future population, housing, and employment for Junction City. These estimates were obtained from the Lane County coordinated population forecasts for the Junction City urban growth boundary (UGB) and the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element and Economic Opportunities Analysis. These studies project an increase in households from 2,582 in 2010 to 4,455 in 2035, and an increase in employment from 3,545 jobs in 2010 to 7,240 in 2035. The estimates are then allocated to zones within the City where growth is expected to occur.

Housing growth is expected to occur primarily in the western portion of the City, while employment uses are anticipated primarily to the south, including the hospital and prison site, UGB expansion areas along OR 99, and other Junction City industrial areas.

Using the housing and employment forecasts, traffic volumes are estimated using a travel forecasting tool developed specifically for Junction City that converts land uses into motor vehicle trips. Most of the growth in traffic volumes will occur along OR 99 and other key arterial routes, such as High Pass Road, Oaklea Drive and 18th Avenue. Pitney Lane, OR 36 and Prairie Road are also expected to experience moderate levels of traffic growth.

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In the earlier planning study for the OR 99 Highway Refinement Plan (2008), significant congestion was forecast along OR 99. In response, major highway projects were considered, including a bypass of Junction City. A couplet configuration through Junction City was selected as the preferred alternative.

However, the current future projections for traffic along OR 99 are much lower. The level of growth over the 20-year planning period is similar, but today's traffic volumes that new growth would be added to are much lower than they were back in 2006. This is largely due to the recession and the loss of a major employer (Country Coach) that was located in a central area.

As a result, future congestion along OR 99 is not a significant issue and the major highway projects (i.e., the couplet) do not appear to be necessary through the new planning horizon of 2035. While the couplet wouldn't be a recommended project in Junction City's TSP, they should not dismiss it entirely because the need for it may return later (and could be needed the next time the City updates their TSP). Therefore, these improvements should be documented in the appendix for future consideration.

The CAC reviewed future bicycle, pedestrian, motor vehicle and transit needs. Key bicycle issues consist of a lack of bicycle facilities, a lack of connectivity and limited and dangerous crossings at OR 99 and the railroad. Existing shared-use paths are too narrow and adequate bike parking is infrequent. Key pedestrian issues also consist of a lack of continuity and connectivity of sidewalks, limited and dangerous crossings at OR 99 and the railroad, narrow sidewalks on OR 99 and a need for sidewalk maintenance and ADA compliance.

Motor vehicle issues include safety on OR 99. Most collisions occur between OR 99 and 1st Avenue, but severities worsen to the south where posted speeds are higher. Other issues include sight obstruction, lighting and needed street extensions. Widening High Pass Road to accommodate additional traffic may be difficult without impacting the historic cemetery. Long delays are expected when making a left turn onto High Pass Road from Maple Street. Safe access for properties along OR 99 is also of concern, especially in UGB expansion areas south of 1st Avenue. Travel Demand Management policies are needed to manage peak hour traffic demand for larger future employers.

Transit system issues include a potential need to increase service or modify routes as the City grows. Bicycle and pedestrian access to bus stops is also needed. Availability of paratransit services in Junction City are limited.

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Projections of the revenue anticipated to be available for future capital projects are estimated at approximately \$2.4 million through 2035. This does not include any one-time or project specific grants or other non-routine sources of revenue.

In summary, there are not many new issues anticipated in the future that are not present today. Improvements are needed to bring some roads up to urban standards, widening them with sidewalks and bike lanes where possible. Needed pedestrian improvements include filling sidewalk gaps, bringing sidewalks up to ADA standards, and making crossings safer at OR 99. Enhancements to bike facilities and transit (Lane Transit District) also are needed.

CAC members expressed concern about the lack of safe crossings at OR 99. Upgrades to existing signals, including timing, illumination and audio features could improve conditions. John suggested that pedestrian actuated crossings at OR 99 and 4th Avenue or other intersections could be considered. CAC members suggested that 8th Street is another popular intersection for pedestrian crossing and participants at the Open House may identify additional intersections. The project team will send bicycle, pedestrian and motor vehicle/transit issues maps to CAC members by email.

Preliminary Discussion of Walking and Biking Improvements

John reviewed a handout describing bicycle facility alternatives to CAC members, including:

- Shared lane markings/sharrows
- Shoulder bikeways
- Standard bike lanes
- Buffered bike lanes
- Cycle tracks
- Shared use paths
- Bike boulevards

In response to a CAC question about bicycle facilities impeding the flow of motor vehicle traffic, John indicated that there are a variety of options to alleviate that problem ranging from facilities that separate bikes from cars to eliminating parking on one side of the street in some areas. Several CAC members expressed concern about limiting parking.

CAC members reviewed several preliminary biking improvements and stated that impacts on existing traffic flow and infrastructure should be considered. They first discussed Rose Street between 10th and 18th Avenues. Proposed improvements include a painted bike lane from 18th to 13th Avenue where on-street parking is not needed and is rarely used (BL1). Shared lane markings were proposed from 13th to 10th Avenue (SLM1). CAC members noted that having bikes share the road would be dangerous because of high traffic volumes and because the curve in the road is quite dangerous as it is today. Installing bike lanes is not supported either because it would require removing parking throughout the neighborhood,

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which is not desirable. Another suggestion was placing bike facilities on school property from Rose Street southeast to Oak Street and then continue south on Oak. CAC members also indicated that several property owners have expressed concerns about locating paths along ditches. Stacy stated that paths along ditches would be contingent upon property owner participation.

Next, CAC members discussed how best to allow people to travel safely by walking and biking between Laurel Elementary School, Oaklea Middle School, and Junction City High School. The preliminary proposal creates a continuous route along Maple Street from High Pass Road to 7th Avenue, then shifting east to Laurel Street to reach the elementary school.

Bike lanes on Maple Street from High Pass Road to 6th Street would be preferred, but would require removal of on-street parking. Shared lane markings could be considered as an alternative. Another suggestion was to place a path on school property between 3rd and 5th Avenues. Kevin Watson noted that the City applied for a grant to realign Maple Street and Prairie Road where they intersect 1st Avenue. The project utilizes the existing right of way for the most part.

The proposed route would continue north on Maple across the four way stop at 6th Avenue. At 7th Avenue, the path shifts one block to the east and continues on Laurel Street to Laurel Elementary (BVD1). The proposed route type also changes north of 6th Avenue from shared lane markings (or bike lanes) to a bike boulevard, which would encourage low motor vehicle speeds and prioritize the movement of bicycles. It was noted that a LTD bus route comes down Maple Street. A CAC member suggested moving the bike boulevard to Nyssa Street instead, one block to the west instead of to the east. There are already four-way stops on Nyssa at both 6th and 10th Avenues.

Painted bike lanes are proposed along 6th Avenue from Oaklea Drive to Deal Street due to its identification as a collector and higher volumes of motor vehicles. On-street parking would be removed from Oaklea to Timothy Place (BL2). Further to the east, CAC members' only concern is that parking is needed for football games at the High School. Through the downtown, the angled parking would need to be converted to parallel parking to make room for bike lanes. CAC members felt that even though traffic volumes are higher, having bikes share the road in the downtown (instead of using bike lanes) seemed okay because speeds are low. The final segment from Front to Birch Street would be restriped to add bike lanes.

John asked CAC members about providing a bicycle bypass to the east of OR 99 for recreational bikers. CAC members thought there was merit to providing a continuous route for bikers and suggested contacting Travel Lane County to ask about scenic bike routes. John suggested putting it in the TSP as a project and figuring out the details later.

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Public Comments/Questions

One member of the public asked the CAC to keep bikers on the roads and not on paths in yards and ditches. Creating such paths outside city limits is feasible, but much harder to do on existing urban properties.

Next Steps and Adjourn

DKS will update these materials to reflect CAC comments. The TAC and CAC will reconvene at the beginning of May to discuss possible solutions and host an open house for public comment.